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THE THIRD CONGRESS FOR PEACE.

Held in Rome from the 11th to the 16th of November, 1891.

BY REV. DR. MATTEA PROCHET.

At one P. M. (11th November), the Congress was inaugurated in grand style in the "Aula Capitolina" where its members were duly and officially received by the municipal authorities of the eternal city, represented by the Hon. Signor Bonacci, M. P., the Mayor being prevented from attending by an indisposition.

It is not difficult to imagine the eloquent discourse that fell from the lips of Signor Bonacci, being given the circumstances of time and place. I shall not even try to rehearse it and will confine myself to one point only. Signor Bonacci discoursed of ancient Rome, of Rome of the middle ages and demonstrated that both had failed to secure peace. He elicited the applause of his Italian hearers when in a kind of parenthesis he said that for Rome the middle age came down till 1870. The two Romes having failed to secure peace to mankind, it was the privilege of the third Rome to give hospitality to the Congress from which the cause would be advanced if not completed. Making the usual confusion between papacy and Christianity, which is so common in France and Italy, Signor Bonacci uttered the striking words of which I give a literal translation: "Having thus demonstrated impossible the *peace of the gods*, having shown vanished as a vain phantom the idea of the *peace of God*, there remains only the *peace of men*."

The Christian readers will easily realize how one felt tempted to break through the rules and to protest against such high sounding and empty words! Happily our worthy president Signor Bonghi, in his admirable opening address which followed immediately the discourse of Signor Bonacci, without appearing to reply to the afore quoted words, really answered them. In the course of his remarks he said that the object of the Congress was to realize the Christian idea more completely than it had been in the years past; showing that it was not the fault of Christianity but the fault of its representatives if peace has not occupied hitherto in this world the place it ought to have. "War itself has undergone a change since the Christian idea has entered the world. We still kill men, but we do not kill people any more. As if ashamed of what he is going to do, man prepares beforehand all the remedies he can possibly imagine for the wounds he is going to make."

The Baroness von Suttner (Austrian), Messrs. Hodgson Pratt (English), R. B. Howard (American), Ducommun (Swiss), Vasseur (French) and others acknowledged in the name of those whom they represented the brilliant reception they were having at the hands of Rome.

At ten P. M. of the same day the association of the Press invited the members of Congress to a conversazione which was prolonged till the small hours of the morning for those who wished to stay so long.

On the following day the Congress was duly constituted and set at work. The Hon. Signor Ruggiero Bonghi, M. P., and Councillor of State, was confirmed president and the twelve vice-presidents and twelve secretaries whom he himself indicated were approved of. If all the delegates were present we ought to be three hundred with full power to discuss and to vote, representing seventeen countries, namely, Germany, Great Britain, Austria, United States, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Spain, France, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Holland, Roumania, Servia and

Switzerland and eighty different societies whose names it would be too long to enumerate.

A little incident giving the *couleur locale*, I wish to relate, notwithstanding its smallness. The hour of the meeting had been fixed at 10 A. M., but it was full 10.30 when the president called the meeting to order and gave three minutes for silent prayer. Before beginning the business an Englishman with the calm quaintness which characterizes his fellow countrymen, asked the president to have the kindness to tell him if 10 o'clock meant 10.30 in Italy! He had no definite objection to it, he only wished to know the customs of the country. The gentle rebuke had a wonderful effect and from that day the Congress was a model of punctuality.

Captain Siccardi had the honors of the first day, with a brilliant oration against War and especially against standing armies and more especially against barracks, on which he heaped all the scalding words that the vocabulary could furnish him with. The eloquence of the figures he quoted was still greater than his own burning words. Nine hundred millions of dollars are annually spent by the European Powers to keep three millions of soldiers fully equipped, armed and ready to slay one another. Captain Siccardi demands the disarmament and the substitution of the armed nation to the standing army. Advocate Lorini objects to the second part of the proposition and not improperly, points to the great principle of the Peace Societies, namely, the substitution of arbitration to war. "War by an armed nation, or War by a standing army, it is War always, and we are met precisely to study the means to promote the speedy and entire abolition of War." I need hardly say that many speakers took part in the discussion, which was continued still in the afternoon. There were two sittings per day—from 10 A. M. to 12 M. and from 2 to 5 P. M.

In the afternoon of the Thursday, Hon. W. W. Story, an American artist who resides in Rome, representing the American Peace Society, speaks in the name of America and tells how far the United States have gone already on the way of adopting arbitration to solve the difficulties and quarrels between nations. Another orator refers to the speech of President Harrison of the United States, delivered at the great Wesleyan conference held in Washington some months ago. Other delegates point to the importance of keeping good feelings between man and man in order to have good dispositions between nations and nations.

Evidently one could expect some eccentric speech in an assembly of this kind. So for example, Count B. proposed most seriously that the Parliaments of Europe should approach the Russian autocrat to ask him to grant a constitution and a parliament to his own country! An Englishman insists upon the necessity of setting immediately at work in order to form and to constitute the *United States of the World*. And another one flying higher still speaks of this world as being after all but an infinitesimally small part in the "Grand Sidereal Republic." But these and similar outbursts do not take away a whit from the good, thought-out, practical, common sense things proposed by orators of various countries.

Amongst them I can name as having taken a more prominent part in the proceedings and exercised a decided influence on them, the following delegates: Messrs. Hodgson Pratt, Moscheles, Snape, Clark, M. P. (England), R. B. Howard and Story (America), Passy, Gaillard, M. P. (France), Bajer (Denmark), Ducommun

(Switzerland), Fleva (Roumania), Marcoartu (Spain), Bonghi, Mazzoleni, Siccardi, Alfieri (Italy), Mesdames Baroness von Suttner (Austria), Mrs. Ormsby (America), and Miss Robinson (Liverpool). Mrs. Ormsby presented the Congress with a silk star-spangled banner embroidered by friends in her country. I need hardly say that Mrs. Ormsby, the banner and accompanying speech were received with great applause. The next day all the daily papers spoke of the "Simpatica Signora Americana."

Time does not permit me to follow minutely the discussions day after day nor even to name them all. Besides it would be impossible to reproduce in writing the vivacity, the eloquence, the pathos of some of the speakers who elicited warm approbation or enthusiastic applause. The four days passed rapidly leaving a pleasant souvenir in the memory of all those that were present. What will the practical, lasting results be, the future will tell.

The main resolutions were:

(1) The formation of a permanent International Committee to act between one congress and another and to serve as a bond between the various Peace Societies of the world.

(2) The fixing the place of the next Congress—Berne.

(3) The declaration that permanent arbitration treaties between the peoples are the safest and the shortest way to pass from the state of war and armed truce to that of peace, by the institution of progressive international jurisdiction.

(4) "The basis of the rights of the future" expressed as follows: No individual has the right to be judge in his own cause; No State has the right of declaring war against another; All differences between nations must be arranged by means of judicial process; Between nations there is a natural solidarity and they have, like individuals, the right of legitimate defence, the right of conquest does not exist; All peoples have the unquestionable and inalienable right of disposing freely of themselves; The autonomy of all nations is inviolable.

(5) A motion signed by Rev. R. B. Howard and Dr. Darby is also approved heartily.

The Congress heartily approves of the efforts put forth by American citizens to secure a

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in 1893, the objects of which shall be to consider and formulate measures by which the principle of arbitration may be embodied in "treaties," conflicting international laws be harmonized, and an international tribunal be established having jurisdiction in cases which governments may fail to settle by negotiation.

And it resolves, That if the United States of America, or any other nation, should invite a Government Conference as above described, it would become the duty of the peace-loving people of the world to urge upon each nation the acceptance of such a proposition.

Several motions were sent to the next Congress and others voted out of order. Amongst the latter ones there is one of which I wish to speak at a greater length, namely:

Resolved, That inasmuch as the spirit of War is unquestionably opposed to the precepts, example and Spirit of Jesus Christ, this Congress would appeal to all who bear the Christian name to co-operate in securing

the prevention of war and its final abolition from the earth.

It was moved by Rev. R. B. Howard, of Boston, and seconded by Dr. Darby, of London. They having previously shown the motion to President Bonghi and made sure that he would have no objection to it, did not expect to meet with any opposition worth speaking of in the assembly and consequently did not take all the precautions they might otherwise have taken. But, on hearing the word "Christian" many of the Italians and French thought of the Pope and vehemently opposed the resolution on that account; others thought that the movers of the resolution wanted to lead the Congress into religious disputes or feared their motion might, and opposed it for that reason. In vain did the aforementioned gentlemen, and especially Mr. Howard, display the resources of their unquestionable eloquence, when the Marquis Alfieri di Sostegno rose to move the previous question, the majority sided with him. This needs to be explained that the readers may not remain under an erroneous impression. Mr. Howard and Dr. Darby spoke in English so that nine-tenths of the continental members of Congress did not understand them, and their translators, Englishmen themselves, did not do justice to their addresses while turning them into French or into Italian. Unfortunately they did not think of getting their motion signed by some Italian brother who sympathized with them and would perhaps more effectively have rendered their thoughts and enabled their fellow-countrymen to appreciate them.

To enable the readers to understand this I must add that owing to the amount of business crowded into these last hours, when the motion was presented, the President had ruled with the consent of the Congress that only the movers of a resolution should be allowed to speak in its favor. However, that vote, though unfortunate, has not the importance that a mere outsider might give to it. In the first place the majority against the motion was not very large; in the second place many voted not understanding well the subject and driven to it by the prestige of Marquis Alfieri. I am sure of what I say by the conversations I had afterwards with several people. A distinguished Parisian lady, member of the Congress, who had not been able to follow the discussion from her place, asked me to tell her what had taken place, and when I had explained the meaning of the vote—"The idiots!" she exclaimed. One of the leading papers of the town the next day qualified the vote with a very energetic word *bestialité*!—stupidity! I have no doubt that the proposition will be carried at the next Congress if wisely brought forth.

I think I should be wrong were I to omit a detail which may perhaps draw a smile upon the lips of some people but which I am sure will please many others. Every morning half an hour before the opening of the Congress, some members of it, varying from eighteen to thirty, met for prayer in an adjoining room. How pleasant and refreshing were those half-hours. English, Americans, French and Italians met in that room as brethren, and their fervent prayers which followed each other like a stream, have certainly had their influence felt though unseen. Is not our God the hearer of prayer?

Speaking of prayer I wish to add another little incident which interested me very much. President Bonghi at the request of some of the members of Congress graciously consented to give three minutes for silent prayer

at the opening of every morning sitting. I must add to his honor that when interviewed for that object he declared emphatically that so far as he was concerned he would have willingly called upon some one to open the meeting with prayer. Well, one morning when the three minutes were about expiring, an English lady belonging to the Society of Friends began to pray aloud and offered an earnest petition. The continental members, for the most part, thought that she was delivering an address. The French lady I have mentioned above asked me what the English lady had been saying. "She has been praying." "Praying," she exclaimed with an unmistakable and deep expression of astonishment on her face, "Praying! and what did she say?" "She has asked God to bless the President and all the members of Congress and so direct all the discussions that they may co-operate efficiently to reach the aim for which we are gathered." "How beautifully simple!" replied Mme. R. "You see, sir, I do not belong either to one party or to another, but I respect all and especially strong convictions, and, shall I tell you, the longer I live, the more I see and observe the more I become convinced that we must come back to it (meaning God and prayer) or else we are done for (*nous sommes flambés*).

And, now, a word in conclusion. It is the first time that I have taken part in a Congress for Peace. I have given five days to it and I do not regret them. For a man whose hands are always overfull with work it is no small compliment. But I go further and wish to declare that I do deplore that so many Christians keep aloof from Peace Societies. I know that in many Peace Societies are to be found men and women whose religious feelings are in flat contradiction with Christianity. But is that a sufficient reason to stay away from them? We Christians believe them to be on the wrong side, nay, more, we believe them to be fatally wrong; and what are we doing to save them? By our sermons?—they do not listen to them. By our books?—they do not read them. There is one platform on which we meet them and do some good to them, the platform on which common sympathy for one good object brings us together. The Master said that his disciples were to be the "Salt of the earth." Now everybody knows that the salt must be *in* the kettle and not at its side if it is to salt its contents. But I check myself before I go too far on the sermonizing line. I cannot help believing that living Christians would do a world of good by mixing with infidels for the accomplishment of good objects such as that which the Peace Societies have in view.

ROME, December, 1891.

—It is officially reported that in every four years period of the German army statistics one thousand private soldiers commit suicide.

—Rev. W. Evans Darby, LL.D., delivered a very interesting and warmly welcomed address on "The Peace Teaching of the late James Russell Lowell," in Glasgow, Oct. 13, 1891. This leads us to think how much there was in the "Biglow Papers," and even in the great "Commemoration Ode" that rose higher than the spirit of strife.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN PEACE SOCIETY AND THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT AT WASHINGTON IN RELATION TO THE SETTLEMENT OF THE ITALIAN CONTROVERSY.

6 JOY ST., BOSTON, Nov. 26, 1891.

TO BENJAMIN HARRISON,

President of the United States:

SIR: May I ask the privilege, as President of the American Peace Society and on behalf of many citizens, to express to you our earnest wish that relations of friendliest accord may be re-established between Italy and our own powerful and beloved country.

Of course we sympathize thoroughly with the American view of the controversy, yet we feel that now, as always, it is well to give full weight to the opinions and feelings of the other side.

I happened to be in Rome last winter when the correspondence was going on, and I took pains to watch the expressions of opinion, not only in Italy, but in the press of Germany and France, and especially of England. It was with a sense of deep annoyance that I observed what seemed to me their unjust criticisms of the United States. Yet I suppose we must heed the judgment of impartial persons, especially where they are usually so full of appreciation of the magnanimity and power and marvellous prospects of America.

May we not justly treasure as one of the grandest heritages which we and our ancestors have achieved, and which we shall transmit to our children, this sincere and well-grounded respect of other civilized lands for America, based on our high sense of justice, and our respect for all other countries, however small they may be, compared with our own vast proportions. Another consideration bearing on this question with Italy grows out of the fact that our people are fast becoming the greatest travellers in other lands, and that it is for the interest of our citizens that a very high standard of protection be universally recognized for the inhabitants of one country travelling or living in another. As a frequent traveller for thirty-five years I have always observed with pride and pleasure, the conscious sense of absolute security which our countrymen feel in the almost visible protection which our nationality affords and which all other nations honorably and instantly respect.

These various considerations may well lead the United States to take such action in adjusting our disagreement with Italy as to deserve and receive the approval of the best men of all lands for our magnanimity and courtesy. Neither they nor we can forget, whatever shape correspondence or settlement may assume, the overwhelming preponderance of power of the United States, which the press of Europe recognizes in one way or another at every turn, and the fact that Italy is struggling bravely up into increasing liberty under grave difficulties.

The respect and admiration which Americans have always cherished towards Italy and which the Italians have reciprocated towards the United States may also inspire us to deal with this controversy in such a way that this long and deeply cherished international friendship may not be lost. The friendship of nations is of priceless value to them and to the world.

If therefore you should think it judicious to express in your annual message, which all Europe will read, as well as the United States, the regret which America feels at the outbreak and at the misunderstanding which has